

Chatterbox #64 – Looking back – 2011

Transcript

Harp/Maura: Happy New Year!

Maura: From Culips. This is Maura.

Harp: And Harp.

Maura: And we're here with your New Year's episode at Culips.

Harp: Yes. And check out our website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Maura: At our website, you can find out how to become a member. And when you're a member, you have access to all kinds of extra stuff to help you understand our episodes, including a transcript, more detailed explanations of some of the words we talk about, and a quiz.

Harp: And come join the party at Facebook. There's so much exciting conversation happening there.

Maura: Yeah. That's where you can talk to us, too.

Harp: Yeah. And we give you little updates on what's going on and we post a lot pictures from our recording sessions and just life in Montreal.

Maura: So, let's get started with our episode today.

Harp: Yeah. Today we're going to do a Chatterbox, which is where we chat about different topics, sometimes we interview people, we talk about cultural things, and today we're going to talk about...

Maura: The year! It's the time of year when you start thinking about the past year that you just had, and also you think about what's going to happen in the year to come. It's the perfect time when you're kind of **in limbo**, in between.

Harp: Yeah, it's a reflective time.

Maura: Right. So, in this Chatterbox episode, first we're gonna talk about the past year. We're gonna talk about things that have happened with us in the past year, and also we're gonna look back on past Culips episodes.

Harp: Yeah. And then we're gonna look to the future and we're gonna talk about some plans we have for next year and also some fun, exciting episodes we'll be doing for next year.

- Maura: Mmhhh. We're always thinking of new things we can talk about on Culips. And so far, we haven't run out of ideas.
- Harp: No, we have so many ideas. And if you have an idea of an expression or a cultural topic you want us to talk about, send us an email or post it on Facebook. Let us know.
- Maura: Yeah. We've been known to take your advice very seriously.
- Harp: We do, yeah.
- Maura: OK. So, let's first start by looking back at the past year.
- Harp: OK. Well, for me, 2011 was a pretty **big year**. I got a new job in February, so it was very busy at work.
- Maura: That's very exciting. Are you happy about the change?
- Harp: Yes, I love my job. I keep saying new job, but it's been a year already almost, so, it's very, very nice. It's a good job, really good company. It's so much of a challenge for me, but I really like it because I think I'm learning a lot and it's just fantastic.
- Maura: That's great. That's the kind of job that everyone wishes they could find.
- Harp: Yeah. I'm very lucky and I'm very grateful.
- Maura: Yeah, good! Well, me too. I'm still teaching, but this past year I started teaching at a new school and I really like this school and I really enjoy the students, so it's a really great change and I'm happy about that, too.
- Harp: That's exciting.
- Maura: But you know what? When I think back over the whole year, there's not that much other stuff that I did. It kind of makes me wonder where the year went.
- Harp: Well, you did a lot of camping and hiking in the summer.
- Maura: You're right. Because I'm a teacher, I don't work in the summers, other than for Culips, so I have lots of time to do outdoor stuff, which I love to do. And so I went camping and hiking, but with the weather right now, I can't do any of that, so I'll have to wait for a few more months.
- Harp: Yeah, definitely. For me, I was lucky. I went on a trip to Puerto Rico in April and it was amazing.
- Maura: Oh, that's fun. What did you do there?

- Harp: Basically, I sat on the beach, relaxed, went for a swim in the ocean, ate a lot of good food.
- Maura: Oh really, eh?
- Harp: It was pretty amazing. Puerto Rico's a fun place to go.
- Maura: Yeah, I think so. That sounds really good.
- Harp: And just the name: *Puerto Rico*.
- Maura: Yeah, it does sound fun. It kind of makes you feel like dancing or something.
- Harp: Yeah, exactly. So it's been a good year.
- Maura: Yeah. And it's also been a good year at Culips, because one of the big changes, I think, is that we really started using Facebook a lot more and so we've been able to have so much more interaction with you, our listeners. We get to hear what you're thinking, and you can give us suggestions, and we can also let you in on **our world** a little bit, too.
- Harp: Yeah. Culips on Facebook has been amazing for us. I love that we get to post pictures and then hear what your comments are. It's just... It's a fun little place for us to connect with our listeners.
- Maura: For sure. So, Harp, I have a question for you.
- Harp: What is it?
- Maura: What are a couple of your favourite Culips episodes from this past year? Just two. You can only pick two.
- Harp: Only two. Wow, that's hard. We've done so many fun expressions and episodes. Hmm... One of my favourite expressions that we've done, that we've covered, is **fantabulous**.
- Maura: Oh yeah. **Fantabulous**.
- Harp: I just love the word: **fantabulous**.
- Maura: So that was the episode that we did about blended words, where sometimes in English we take two words and then we make a new word. We blend the words to create one new word and we use this in a slang way. And one of those words is **fantabulous**.
- Harp: Yeah, because **fantabulous** is a mix between *fantastic* and *fabulous*, and it means what those two words mean: great and fantastic and amazing.

- Maura: Yeah. That was a fun one because that is a real, true, slang episode, I think.
- Harp: Yes, definitely.
- Maura: Yeah. So what's one more that you really liked?
- Harp: Hmm... Another one that I really liked was ***you're my rock***.
- Maura: OK. So, do you remember what that means out there?
- Harp: **Pop quiz** time!
- Maura: Well, ***to be someone's rock*** means that you're really there for them. If someone ever needs you, you support them and you help them through a rough time. And you know if you're going through something difficult you can always count on that person.
- Harp: Yeah. I really like this one, I think, because I have so many good friends and my family. I have so many people who I can call **my rock**.
- Maura: That's really nice.
- Harp: What about you, Maura? What are your two favourite slang or expressions from this past year?
- Maura: Well, you know, it's really hard to choose because a lot of them are kind of interesting.
- Harp: I know. I think we've done a lot of interesting episodes. But come on, Maura, you have to pick two.
- Maura: Well, I like the episodes where I learn something too. And sometimes when I'm preparing for an episode, I start looking for the origin or possible past connections to the expression, and then that's when I learn something about where it came from. So, one of my favourite episodes is ***to steal someone's thunder***.
- Harp: ***To steal someone's thunder***.
- Maura: Yeah. So, ***to steal someone's thunder*** is to kind of take attention away from that person. Or if that one person should receive credit or recognition for something, another person steals it from them and kind of takes all the attention.
- Harp: And what did you learn for the **back story** about that that was interesting for you?

- Maura: Well, this **back story** was kind of complicated, but **to steal someone's thunder** comes from a play. And a long time ago, there was someone who created the sound effect for thunder, for a play, and then another person stole that sound effect, stole that technology. And so, one person stole the other person's actual sound effect for thunder, but at the same time, they also stole the recognition for creating that. It sounds complicated, I know, but for me, it was really interesting to find out where it came from.
- Harp: Yeah. I remember that from when we did that episode. That is a very interesting story.
- Maura: Before that, I used to just think of someone having, like, a lightning bolt in their hand and then someone coming up and stealing it. I never understood the expression or why we use **thunder**.
- Harp: Yeah. No, it makes sense now.
- Maura: Yeah.
- Harp: It's a good expression.
- Maura: The other one that I like is **garden-variety**.
- Harp: **Garden-variety**.
- Maura: Just because it's two little words, sounds so simple, and, again, I learned the origin of where this expression came from. And so, when something is **garden variety**, it means it's very plain, normal, average, nothing special. And this expression, **garden variety**, comes from plants. And if a plant is a **garden-variety** plant, literally, it means it's just a regular plant. It's not exotic or anything expensive or extremely beautiful. So that was also interesting for me.
- Harp: That was an interesting episode with **garden-variety** and to hear where the expression came from.
- Maura: So, we hope that all of those sound familiar. And if you've forgotten them, **lucky you**, you can just go back and check them out. And if you've never listened, you can check **'em** out for the first time. They're still there.
- Harp: And if you've listened, I hope you're using these expressions.
- Maura: Mmhmm. That's the next step, is actually putting these expressions into use.
- Harp: Yes.
- Maura: So, let's look forward now. Would you say it's about time?

- Harp: I think it's about time. So, 2012... Maura, any plans?
- Maura: Well, you know, after you say that year, it makes me think about the end of the world, because so many, especially teenagers at school, are taking about the end of the world in December.
- Harp: Oh yeah. There's some theory that the world is gonna end in 2012. That's what it is, right?
- Maura: Exactly. So this is actually a really important year, just in case. We better make it an important year that counts.
- Harp: Yeah. Live life to the fullest.
- Maura: Well, one thing I'm really excited about this year is that I'm going on a vacation with my sisters.
- Harp: Oh yeah. You're going away in March, I think, right?
- Maura: Yeah. **First of all**, I haven't been on a real vacation in a while and **second of all**, I'm going with my sisters, so it's gonna be really fun. And it'll be in the winter, when it's really cold and not yet spring, so I'm really looking forward to that.
- Harp: So I'm guessing you're not going to the North Pole.
- Maura: No. We're definitely going somewhere where we don't need a winter coat.
- Harp: OK, you're gonna **go down south**. I like it.
- Maura: Yeah. So I'm definitely looking forward to that this year. What about you, Harp? What are you looking forward to in the year 2012?
- Harp: Well, I have a plan that I'm gonna try to buy a condo.
- Maura: Oh, interesting. So that's a big deal.
- Harp: It's a huge deal for me. I've been saving my money and I've started looking at condos, but I think I'm really particular and I want something very specific. So I'm not sure if I'll find something, but I really, I wanna become a homeowner and I'm pretty excited to take that next step.
- Maura: Mmm, cool. You know, I just had an idea. Next year, if the world survives, we should listen to this episode and see if your prediction came true for yourself.
- Harp: I hope so. Yeah, that's a good idea, though.

- Maura: Yeah. And another thing, of course, that we're both thinking about is what's gonna happen with Culips in 2012.
- Harp: Yeah. We have a lot of good ideas already for some episodes we're gonna be preparing for next year.
- Maura: Yeah. So, hopefully, we'll keep making great episodes and the number of listeners for us will continue to grow. Maybe it will even **skyrocket**.
- Harp: I hope so!
- Maura: Yeah. And that would be really great to keep doing more and more with Culips.
- Harp: Yeah. And at our brainstorming session, what ideas are you the most excited about for next year?
- Maura: Well, one episode that I was really happy with and really excited to do was the episode about *blah blah blah*.
- Harp: Ha ha, yeah. The episode about *blah blah blah*.
- Maura: Yes. And if you've never heard that, it might sound very funny, but it's actually how people talk sometimes. Just last week, actually at work, I heard someone telling a story and they said *blah blah blah* and then they told a little bit more of the story and again they said *blah blah blah* in the same story. And I thought "Great!" Because this is actually being used and we're going to do an episode on this.
- Harp: Yes, definitely. So stay tuned next year to hear this episode.
- Maura: Yeah. This episode actually has *blah blah blah, yadda yadda yadda, whatshername* and *whatshisname*, and *whatchamacallit*. So it's a really good one.
- Harp: *Whatchamacallit*.
- Maura: Yeah. What about you? What are you looking forward to in terms of Culips episodes?
- Harp: Well, there's gonna be a super fun and interesting episode about fears and what we're afraid of.
- Maura: I'm already scared for that one.
- Harp: Yeah. It's gonna be a good one. We're gonna talk about some common phobias that people have and things that we're afraid of.

- Maura: Yeah. I won't tell you now, I'll save it for that episode, but I'll admit the one little thing that I'm sometimes afraid of.
- Harp: That's funny, because I think **I'm a little bit of a chicken** and afraid of a lot of things. So my list might be long.
- Maura: Yours is long, but mine's maybe embarrassing.
- Harp: That's funny. I'm excited to hear about it.
- Maura: OK, so that's what you can maybe look forward to in our year of 2012 at Culips. And remember if you ever have any ideas for a Chatterbox episode, something cultural, or if you hear an expression that you wanna know the answer to, you can send us an email or you can ask us about on Facebook. And if it's a really great idea, we might do an episode about it.
- Harp: Yeah, for sure. And I just thought about this, but let us know: What's your favourite episode from the last year?
- Maura: That would be great to know too, because then we can kinda see what your style is, what kind of expressions you're interested in. So if you have a favourite or a few favourites, let us know which ones they were and why.
- Harp: Yes, we're intrigued to know about that.
- Maura: Another thing that would be really great in our Culips future would be to travel around and visit other countries and visit schools where people are learning English as a second language and talk to people and do workshops with people.
- Harp: Yeah. And to meet our fans. That would be amazing.
- Maura: So if you want us to come visit your language school, send us a message, especially if you live in a warm country and it's the Canadian winter. Then we'll really be happy to come.
- Harp: Or we can go somewhere that's cold but in the summer, when it's warm there.
- Maura: Either way, we would love to visit you. So that would be another good prediction for our future.
- Harp: Yeah, definitely.
- Maura: All right. Well, that's about it for this episode.
- Harp: Make sure you check out the website, Culips.com. That's C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

- Maura: And if you're still thinking about what your New Year's resolution is, maybe it should be listen to more Culips.
- Harp: Yes! That's a good New Year's resolution.
- Maura: All right. So, we will talk to you in 2012. See you later.
- Harp: Bye everyone. Happy New Year!
- Maura: Bye!

Detailed Explanation

To be in limbo

To be in limbo means to be in a place of uncertainty or a place in between. When something is **in limbo**, it has been started but not finished. When a person is **in limbo**, they're in a situation that is not resolved.

There's a religious connection to this example, which also gives a clear example of **in limbo**. Some religions believe that when someone dies and is not allowed into heaven, but also does not deserve to go to hell, this person is said **to be limbo**. They are between two places, heaven and hell, and their future is uncertain.

In this episode, Maura says that at New Year's, we're kind of **in limbo**. She means that people are between last year and the next year. The future in the next year is uncertain.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be in limbo**:

Charles: Have we worked on the Smith project lately?

Becky: No, not at all. I think it's been **in limbo** for a while. We're waiting to hear back from the client about some important details before we can go any further.

Sabrina: Did you hear if you got into school for next year? Do you know if you'll be moving next month?

Denis: No! I don't know anything yet. I really feel like I'm **in limbo**. I can't believe they wait so long to tell us whether we got accepted into the program or not.

A big year

How can one year be bigger than another? Of course, we know that **big** means large in size, but **big** can also mean important. When Harp says that 2011 was a pretty **big year**, for her this means that it was an important year and many important events happened.

Here's one more example using **big** to mean important:

Jennifer: That's a pretty **big project** you're working on. This is probably our most important client.

Heather: I know! I hope I don't screw it up!

Our world

In this episode, Maura is talking about Facebook when she says that by communicating on Facebook, "we can also let you in on **our world** a little bit." This means that you get to know what is happening with us, how we live, and what we think. **Our world** really means our lives. When people use **world** to talk about the way they live, this is usually because they think people might not know about them or that other people live differently from them.

Here are a couple more examples with **world** used in this way:

Irene: I can't wait to party this weekend. I'm gonna go out on Friday and Saturday night!
Matt: Have fun! That sounds like another **world** to me. I've got to take care of my kids all weekend.

John: I've got so much homework already, and it's only the first week back at university.
Sidney: Welcome to **my world**! I signed up for some summer courses this year, so I've been studying all summer.

Fantabulous

The word **fantabulous** is from one of Harp's favourite Culips episodes from 2011: Blended Words! This is where, in a slang way, people take two words and blend them together to make one new word that includes the meaning of both of the original words.

Fantabulous is made up of the words *fantastic* and *fabulous*. **Fantabulous** means really fantastic and really fabulous! If you want to know more about this word or other blended words, check out this episode. You can find it by typing "blended words" into the search bar at Culips.com.

Here's an example with **fantabulous**:

Gwen: How was your night out last night?
Nicole: It was **fantabulous**! We danced all night and the music was great.

To be someone's rock

Here's Harp's second favourite episode from this past year. Do you remember it? If **someone is your rock**, it means that this person always supports you and helps you when you need it. If you're feeling sad, you can call **your rock**! If you're **someone else's rock**, this means that your friend knows they can contact you whenever they need to and you'll always be there for them!

Check out this episode if you want to know about this expression and a few other similar ones. Just type "rock" into the search bar at Culips.com and look for the episode titled "You're My Rock" in the search results.

Here's an example with **rock** used this way:

Agnes: Thanks for always being there to talk when I'm upset. **You're my rock**!
Ned: No problem. I don't mind at all. That's what friends are for.

A pop quiz

A **pop quiz** is a short test (usually just multiple choice or short answers) that you do not know about in advance. A teacher might give a class a **pop quiz** on something that the students have spent a short time studying. The word *pop* here represents that the quiz is a surprise, so the students could not have prepared for it.

Of course, Harp isn't your teacher and she's not really giving you a quiz! She says that it's **pop quiz** time because we ask you if you remember the expression *to be someone's rock*, so in that way it's like a little way for you to test your knowledge. This is often how people might use this expression, in a fun, casual way.

Here's an example with **pop quiz**:

Roy: I've got a **pop quiz** for you. Do you remember what we were doing at this time last year?

Amanda: Hmm, I'm not sure...Oh yeah, we were just getting ready to leave on our trip!

To steal someone's thunder

To steal someone's thunder is to take the credit and recognition for someone else's accomplishment. Let's say your coworker does excellent work on a project and your boss congratulates you on doing such great work. If you accept the congratulations and do not say that it was actually your coworker who did the work, then you **steal your coworker's thunder**.

If you want to know more about this expression and the origin that Maura explains in this episode, check out our original episode about it! You can find it by typing "thunder" into the search bar at Culips.com.

Here's one example with **to steal someone's thunder**:

Doug: I didn't mean **to steal Sarah's thunder**.

Olivia: You should go tell the teacher now that the part she thinks you did so well on was actually done by Sarah. It's only fair.

A back story

A back story is the origin of something or someone. **A back story** is additional information about the person or thing that helps you understand more. On the news, if they are telling a story about a 25-year-old woman, her **back story** would be anything about her life from her past.

Harp uses **back story** in this episode to talk about the origin of the expression *to steal someone's thunder*. This is some information about the expression that makes the expression easier to understand and to remember.

Here's an example with **back story**:

Theo: What's the **back story** on Joshua, the guy Sheila's dating?

Donna: Well, according to his Facebook page, it looks like he's dated a lot of people in the past.

Garden-variety

This is Maura's other favourite expression from our 2011 episodes: **garden-variety**.

Garden-variety is used to describe something that is regular and average, not amazing, but not horrible either. If you want to know more about this expression and others like it, listen to the **garden-variety** episode. That's just the title. The episode itself is actually great! Find it by typing "**garden-variety**" into the search bar at Culips.com.

Here's an example with this expression:

Rob: How was the movie last night?

Andre: It was nothing special, just your **garden-variety** romantic comedy.

Lucky you

This is an expression that people say to tell someone that they are lucky. Instead of saying *you're lucky* or *she's lucky*, you say **lucky you** or **lucky her**. Maura says **lucky you** speaking to all the Culips listeners. She says you're lucky because all the past Culips episodes are always available to listen to.

Here's one more example with **lucky you**:

Heidi: Did you hear that Tom just won a trip to Hawaii?

Mike: Wow! **Lucky him!**

You can use this expression with any combination: **lucky him**, **lucky them**, **lucky you**, **lucky me**, **lucky her**, **lucky us**, **Lucky Maura**, etc.

'Em

'Em is the shortened way that people pronounce *them* when speaking, especially when used after a verb. It is not correct to write this, so we recommend that you never do. You might see this written in some creative novels, where the author is trying to show you how the character speaks. Similarly, we sometimes use it in our episode transcripts so that you can see and hear the way we speak in our episodes.

In this episode, Maura tells you to go and check out some past Culips episodes. She says, "Go check **'em** out." When we hear **'em** after a verb, it's the slang version of *them*. It can be used whenever people speak and are supposed to say *them*.

Here's an example with **'em**:

Hannah: I'm going to visit my family this summer.

Alan: Oh, that's nice. When are you visiting **'em**? June?

First of all, second of all

When someone introduces a list, the first and most important item can be introduced with **first of all**. By saying **first of all**, you tell the listener or reader that you will be making a list and that this is just the first item in the list.

When people speak, they might also say **second of all**, although technically this is not correct. Using **first of all** already shows that you will list items, so **second of all** is unnecessary. Instead, you should just say **second**. This is a common English error, so you may hear it in conversation. Many native English speakers don't even know that this is not correct.

Maura says **first of all** and gives her first reason why she is excited to go on her trip. She is excited because she hasn't been on a trip in a long time. The second reason she's excited is because she's going with her sisters. She mistakenly says **second of all** when it's not really necessary, although it's a very common way to speak.

Here's an example listing a few items and using the expressions correctly:

Reanna: What work still needs to be done before we start our vacation?

Charles: **First of all**, we need to send off a few emails. **Second**, we need to make sure that we've handed all our important files over to Diana.

To go down south

Canada is quite far north! In the winter, when we talk (or just dream) of going somewhere warm, we talk about **going down south**. In the Northern Hemisphere, when you go south, it gets warmer. To Canadians, **to go down south** usually means to go to parts of the southern United States, like Florida or Arizona, or to warmer countries like Mexico, the Dominican Republic, or Cuba.

To skyrocket

Maura says she hopes that the number of Culips listeners **skyrockets** in 2012. When something **skyrockets**, it rises or increases to a high level or number, often in a short amount of time. Maura means that she hopes the number of Culips listeners increases a lot in 2012.

A skyrocket is a kind of rocket that shoots up into the air very quickly. This verb, **to skyrocket**, can be linked to actual rockets, as the meaning is that something goes up, or increases, very quickly.

Here are a couple more examples with **to skyrocket**:

Belinda: I can't believe Fred is actually becoming famous in Hollywood. He really did it!

Gina: I know! He seems to be **skyrocketing** to fame.

Brad: We need to discuss our losses over the past year.

Ken: Yes, we do. And the losses unfortunately **skyrocketed** in the last couple of months.

To be a chicken

Harp says that **she's a chicken!** There's also a past Culips episode about this expression: **to be a chicken**. When someone is called **a chicken**, it means that they're afraid of something. A person might be called **a chicken** for being afraid of something specific in a certain situation or they might just be scared of many things, like Harp!

If you want to know more about some of the names we call people who are scared, check out the episode. Just type "chicken" in the search bar at Culips.com and look for the episode called "Slang: Chicken."

Here's an example with **to be a chicken**:

Helen: Let's go cliff diving! It's so fun and I know this great place where we can do it.

Jean: **I'm too much of a chicken** to do that!

Quiz

1. If Frank is in limbo, what does this mean?

- a) His future is certain and planned out.
- b) His future is uncertain, and he is in between two places.
- c) He is dancing and learning the dance for the first time.
- d) He is thinking only about his future and not his past.

2. Katie: Camping was so fun! Thanks for taking care of our dogs this weekend. You got to see what our world is like.

Lynn: It was nice. I'm actually thinking of a getting a pet for myself now.

What is Katie's world?

- a) Camping
- b) Taking care of her dogs
- c) Buying pets
- d) Thanking people

3. Which two words make up the word *fantabulous* and give it its meaning?

- a) fanta and fabulous
- b) freaky and fabulous
- c) fantastic and ridiculous
- d) fantastic and fabulous

4. What kind of test is a pop quiz?

- a) surprise
- b) difficult
- c) easy
- d) long answers

5. Jon Doe robbed a bank on the weekend. What might his back story be?

- a) He bought a car with the money and drove to California.
- b) He robbed the bank with a plastic gun.
- c) He is the son of a famous bank robber and grew up learning his tricks.
- d) He is now in jail.

6. Lisa: I can't believe Jim got such a good price for his car.
Ben: Yeah, _____.

Please fill in the blank with the best fitting expression.

- a) lucky me
 - b) lucky him
 - c) sucks to be him
 - d) sucker
7. What is *'em* slang for?
- a) me
 - b) them
 - c) emotion
 - d) emu
8. The number of people watching television shows online has skyrocketed.
- What does this mean?
- a) The number of people watching shows online has not changed.
 - b) The number of people watching skyrocket shows online has increased.
 - c) The number of people watching shows online has decreased a lot.
 - d) The number of people watching shows online has increased a lot.
9. Harp is a chicken!
- What does this mean?
- a) She has feathers and a beak.
 - b) She is afraid of many things.
 - c) She is afraid of Maura.
 - d) She is funny.

Answers:

1.b 2.b 3.d 4.a 5.c 6.b 7.b 8.d 9.b